

Wages Lost Could Reach \$330 Million per Month

June 16, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) sent a letter to BP CEO Tony Hayward calling on the company to pay the full salary of every oil rig worker who has been laid off due to the moratorium on drilling in the Gulf. Congressman Melancon has been pressing the Administration to end the moratorium on deep-water drilling and clarify new regulations for shallow-water drilling that have created a “de facto” moratorium in the Gulf.

In his letter, Congressman Melancon wrote, **“Today’s announcement that your company has agreed to establish a \$20 billion fund to pay claims and that Mr. Kenneth Feinberg will oversee this fund are steps in the right direction. But the claims process needs to be streamlined to ensure that those who have been harmed by your company’s actions do not suffer further.**

Calling the \$100 million fund BP has created to support unemployed oil rig workers **“merely a drop in the bucket of what is needed to make these workers whole,”**

Congressman Melancon called on BP

“to pay the full salary of each worker whose job has been terminated due to the moratorium for as long as the deepwater drilling ban impacts their employment.”

Congressman Melancon noted, **“[T]he direct wages lost during this shutdown may be as high as \$330 million per month.”**

In conclusion, Congressman Melancon wrote, **“BP has made a promise to take responsibility for the worst-man-made disaster in our nation’s history. Simply put, covering the fully salary of workers who have been terminated because of the drilling ban is part of keeping that promise.”**

Click here to view [Congressman Melancon's letter](#) .

The offshore energy industry is a major economic engine for south Louisiana, providing thousands of jobs and supporting numerous locally-based service companies in Congressman Melancon’s Congressional district. Congressman Melancon has been pressing the Administration to end the moratorium on deep-water drilling and clarify new regulations for shallow-water drilling that have created a “de facto” moratorium in the Gulf.

Today, Congressman Melancon also met with Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to discuss options for ending the moratorium, while still addressing the worker safety and environmental issues raised by the Deepwater disaster. Congressman Melancon [led the delegation letter](#) requesting this meeting.

Congressman Melancon has [joined the entire Louisiana delegation](#) in asking the President to meet with them to discuss how to end the current six-month moratorium on deep-water drilling as quickly as possible. In his

[meeting with President Obama](#)

earlier this month, Congressman Melancon asked the President directly to speed up the federal review of offshore rigs so the moratorium could end to prevent further harm to Louisiana's economy.

Congressman Melancon has been leading efforts in Louisiana to coordinate the private, federal, state, and local response to the oil leak caused by the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform on April 20th. He represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

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